

Ireland. — Parliament. [Appendix.]

T H E

(2)

COMMERCIAL RESOLUTIONS  
OF THE  
IRISH PARLIAMENT,  
IN THEIR PRESENT SESSION,  
VINDICATED.

To which is added,  
AN AUTHENTIC COPY  
OF THE  
RESOLUTIONS.

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THE  
COMMERCIAL RESOLUTIONS,  
&c. &c.

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*Abstract of a Letter from a Member of the British House of Commons, written soon after the late General Election to a Member of the Irish House.*

SIR,

*May, 1784.*

WHEN Ireland was dependant on Great Britain, it was wished by several friends of both Countries to render dependence

dence beneficial to her. Two bills were therefore brought in to the British Parliament, one allowing to Ireland freedom of Exportation to our Colonies and Settlements, the other a like Freedom of Importation from thence, both denied to all Foreign Independent countries.

These were meant as experiments, upon a narrow scale, which, if found advantageous to Ireland without prejudicing Britain, might and ought to be extended further; were it for no other purpose than to preserve Irish dependence by the surest and only justifiable means.

The first Bill passed, but absurdly mutilated; and the little that remained of it was rendered useless by a still more absurd suppression of the second Bill, as an export-trade cannot subsist where imports are prohibited.

When



When Ireland became independent, with an unrestrained freedom of trade to all countries except Great Britain, I wished her friendship should be preserved by opening the Ports of Great Britain upon the same terms that open those of Ireland to Her, convinced as I then was and still am that the comparative magnitude of British Capitals, lowness of Interest and Superiority of skill, with all their necessary consequences, would, under an equality of Duties, secure a continuance of the same advantages to Great Britain which she before evidently possessed under an inequality which operated as a total Prohibition on her side of almost all manufactures except Linen, while she was treated in Ireland, *literally*, as the most favoured Nation in the scale of Duties.

I am aware of the objection, that when Ireland becomes rich, those advantages will lessen

lessem with her Increase and at length totally cease. But wealth, earned and employed in Trade, will ever in a progressive state maintain at least the superiority it had gained: improvements of old manufactures and discoveries of new will more frequently appear, as they now do at Manchester, Birmingham, &c. &c. and Dublin growing richer in her progressive state, but advancing by flower paces, will become a better customer than *poor* Dublin ever was.

But, be this as it may, independent Ireland will never be satisfied under the present inequality of Duties. It is a badge of slavery which she never will patiently bear; and British Parliament alone has the means of recovering it, by lowering the duties there to the Irish standard. The attempt now meditating in Ireland to increase them there in the article of wollens, supported by the most false assertions and most absurd arguments,

ments, would, if it could succeed, certainly be fatal to Ireland, as it would soon be retaliated by England in linens and other articles, while multiplied restraints would at length end in a total prohibition of trade in both countries, such as is only known in a state of war, yet England even now is the best customer Ireland has, giving a longer credit than any other country can for what she sends, and paying quicker remittances for what she receives: Two returns in a year upon the same capital, which double its profits, make one thousand pounds virtually as much as two, where returns are made but once in the same space of time.

You have here the thoughts of an old infirm man, who has bid farewell to all politicks, English and Irish; and who, though elected into this Parliament, is determined to vacate his seat; yet, if you think

think as I do upon this subject, and believe that the expedient will satisfy Ireland, I will defer the execution of my unalterable purpose, until I shall have had an early opportunity of throwing myself and my opinions upon the House of Commons, as I have often done without hazard to the Popularity of Ministers, with whom I was connected, if my opinions were not relished; and willing to give them all the merit if they were approved. In this spirit I now write to you and have the Honour to be, &c. &c.

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*Purport of the Answer received to the above Letter.*

“ **N**OTHING but protecting duties,  
“ heavier upon Merchandise imported  
“ from Great Britain than upon Irish Mer-  
“ chandise

“ chandise imported there, will satisfy  
“ Ireland.”

WHILE a system of duties seemed to be thus insisted upon by Ireland, not equalized by the value of similar Articles in Commerce, as is the universal rule of Tariffs between all Independent States: while in that system allowances were claimed for the inferior abilities of Ireland to supply Great Britain or purchase from her the same articles at the same rates, impossible to be proportioned so as to form a fair standard of Trade; and while these arbitrary conditions were to be imposed by threats and violence proceeding to overt acts of cruel Barbarism, no friend of both countries would insult Great Britain by offering propositions to her Parliament which if accepted there, would be reprobated and spurned by the Irish Par-

liament, the whole Nation applauding their conduct.

Thus circumstanced I retired in despair, and if the Ministers of Great Britain had then introduced any accommodating propositions here, in the first instance, they, instead of asserting the dignity of their country by insisting upon that precedence would have tarnished and debased it: Those who are in the wrong should first make concessions, or if, as happily was the fact in Ireland, faction, ignorance and frenzy, did not speak the sentiments of the People, it behoved the honour and fidelity of their representatives to declare the difference, by offering a plan to the Sister Kingdom supported, and only supported by Equallity, Justice and mutual Interest.

But

But if, having thus acted, the British Parliament should again be influenced, as it was in the two Bills already mentioned, by the mistaken interest of narrow minded men against one common universal interest, the Irish Parliament, though without a prospect of Ireland ever becoming the Emporeum of trade, as was hyperbolically expressed in a late debate, would be the unrivall'd possessor of firmness, liberallity, reason and justice.

*Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum.*

That an opposition here to the Resolutions of the Irish Parliament proceeds from false conceptions, we shall now endeavour to prove by stating those objections which have reached our knowledge; and giving the Answers which have occurred to us.

*Objection 1st.* If Ireland be permitted to export Sugars to Great Britain, she will smuggle in for that purpose Foreign Sugars purchased at a lower price; and by these means under sell British Sugars at their own home market.

*Ans.* The Revenue of Ireland would then suffer doubly, first by being defrauded of the duty payable upon imported Muscovado Sugars, and again by paying upon their exportation a drawback of duties never received, or a premium when refined, more than an equivalent for those duties. The Parliament and Government of Ireland will therefore be most importantly interested in preventing that practice.

Secondly, the Irish consumption of Sugars is considerable, and is chiefly, if not intirely, of Sugars brought from Great Britain. Why then is not that consumption

sumption now entirely supplied with Smuggled Sugars? these would find a demand to a considerable amount, although the British Ports were, as they still are, shut to Irish Exportation.

*Objection 2d.* French, Dutch, Danish, &c. Sugars will be entered as our Plantation Sugars, and, though they pay the same duties, they will be bought cheaper, and so circumstanced will be exported to Britain entitled to a draw back there of the duties paid, or to a Premium, as the case shall happen, upon re-exportation.

*Answer.* The Irish Revenue will be no gainer by this traffick, and therefore will have no Interest in conniving at it. Nor is the difference of Price such as to tempt the fraudulent Merchant to encounter the risk of being discovered.

*Objection*

*Objection 3d.* Irish Merchants would be the sole Importers of Sugars into Ireland directly from the British Plantations.

*Answer.* This objection is the reverse of the foregoing, but the answer is applicable to it: The Irish are at liberty now to import sugars directly, to the full amount of Irish consumption, yet small have been the quantities so imported, since the freedom of a direct importation has been allowed to Ireland.

*Objection 4th.* British merchants will transport themselves and their capitals into Ireland.

*Answer.* Why is not this supposition verified by some instances now to be produced? They certainly will not send their capitals, and stay themselves behind, trusting

to the management of others. But inconvenient and disagreeable as this removal would be to themselves and their families, they would find it more difficult to procure sugar-bakers to remove, and persuade all the subordinate manufacturers to accompany them. Yet should this be effected, they cannot transport their sugar-houses, nor the materials of which they are built. They must be sold here at the price of rubbish; for the buildings cannot be converted to new uses; and the same is true of the utensils. All these must again be provided in Ireland, when the adventurers arrive there, where it will be found, that coals, and many other articles necessary to the refining of sugars, are dearer than in England.

But these are far from being all the disadvantages to be encountered in Ireland: a credit of three years, usually given to the planter by the merchant his creditor, must  
still

still be continued, while the sugar-baker and refiner will require from the merchant a longer respite of payment than is allowed in England, where the shop-keeper, their customer, is sooner and more punctually paid by the customer. Quick returns of small profits, the life of trade, are only to be found in wealthy countries, and men so enriched, will hardly emigrate into poor countries, to meet with delay and disappointments, not to be compensated by cheapness of manual labour, or commodiousness of situation.

But though mere manual labour, such as is employed in delving and ditching, which require no skill, may be hired cheaper from a wretch in poverty and rags, it is much dearer and less valuable in every work of art, shortened in numberless instances by engines enabling one man to do more than

than many. A few years since, there was not a single crane on the Quay of Cork.

The history of commerce rarely produces an instance of a wealthy trader going into a poor country to increase his wealth ; but if cheapness of manual labour necessarily invited large capitals, no poor country would long continue poor; nor indeed any rich country long continue rich, mutually changing and rechanging conditions, as the price of such labour sunk or rose. But though poverty emigrates, or starves, wealth remains fixt to that soil where it grew ; and flourishes in proportion as it spreads its roots deeper and wider there. Transplant an oak, and it perishes.\*

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\* England undersells Ireland at her own Markets with Cloth made of Irish Woollen Yarn, for which a duty is paid there upon Exportation ; and the difference

What has been said of cheap labour, is equally true of commodious situation. The richest mercantile towns in England have the worst harbours: Milford scarcely contains a vessel in its excellent haven, except passing to or from some other port, while the dry mud of Bristol is crowded with ships detained there by many contrary winds, and exposed to fire from the houses but a few yards distant, after having made their way through a most perilous channel to the merchant's warehouses. Were those merchants asked, why they do not remove to Milford Haven? and were the same question proposed to sugar-bakers, glass-men, copper manufacturers, &c. &c. &c. their answer would be, a smile of contempt. Yet predictions much more impossible of emigrations to Dublin, Cork, Waterford, and

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of price is greater in proportion to the fineness of the  
Fabrick.

Limerick,

Limerick, are gravely made, and anxiously listened to.

But if all we have said were false, and Cork were to rival Bristol, while London would be rivalled by Dublin in West Indian imports, though the British merchant would then have a just cause for sorrow and opposition, the West India Planters should rejoice in a view of two markets instead of being confined to one.

This leads us to another objection.

*Objection 5th.* The Planter indebted to his Factor in Britain, as most Planters confessedly are, would change hands and defraud his creditor by consignments into Ireland.

*Answer.* This expedient, though troublesome and expensive to the Creditor, would

would not leave him without a remedy, as the Planter's property in the West Indies would be subject to his demand. It is reported that one or two attempts of this nature were made in England, but defeated.

Nor has it, I believe, been heard that such base policy was, in any instance, practised in supplying the consumption of Ireland ever since a direct importation has been allowed there.

The Planters therefore need not be solicitous to refute so undeserved a calumny, by uniting with the British Merchants. Nor is such solicitude the real cause of an union clearly accounted for without admitting an infamous imputation upon any number of worthy, but generous, men: most Planters are indebted to their Factors, and

by

by consequence are under their power and influence.

There are however many Planters in opulent circumstances, free from all restraint, who, though the advertising Merchants would blend them in one general description, will no doubt separate and distinguish themselves from their enthralled Brethren.

But, if what we have advanced upon this subject be well founded, the Merchant requires no sacrifice from the Planters of their interest to his; his fears are as vain as those of a North British Member of Parliament were, when he foretold in a speech against the importation of Irish live Cattle into Britain, that if it was permitted an Ox would be as rare an animal in our fields as a Lion.

*Objection*

*Objection 6th.* When the ports of Great Britain shall be always open to the importation of grain and flour from Ireland, let the price be ever so low; immense quantities will be poured in from thence, detrimental to the British landlord and tenant.

*Answer.* The dry climate of South Britain is universally more favourable to harvests, than that of rainy Ireland, and the same is true of most parts of North Britain. Potatoes are therefore the general food for Ireland. Yet a great proportion of the comparatively small quantity of grain and flour, consumed there, was supplied by England, until a bounty was granted in Ireland upon exportation; and we believe that the balance, though not so great, is still in favour of England.

Should there be, in an unusual change of seasons, a scarcity here when there is an abundance

abundance in Ireland, a supply from hence will be more to our advantage, than from any other country, and Irish cheapness will then be common blessing to the sister kingdoms.

But should there be a superfluity in both, Britain will preferably consume her own grain and flour free from freight and hazard, which she must pay for; nor will Ireland send her produce to an over-stocked market, while the World is open to her.

It is true that Scotland, in particular, is supplied with Irish oats and meal, in great quantities for her own consumption. But it is also true that Scotch Merchants, and others in parts of South Britain, purchase more than is wanted for that purpose, immediately after harvest, when the miserable Irish tenant is obliged to thresh out his corn, for payment of rent in November to a distressed

stressed and relentless landlord. From hence it often happens that Irish corn is exported at a much lower price, sometimes scarcely exceeding one half of what it afterwards bears, when brought back to drained and starving Ireland.

But admitting that North Britain, chiefly concerned in this question, should sometimes so abound with oats of her own growth, as to render a prohibition of importation advantageous, which seldom happens even for a short time, she will at all other times be a gainer, by cheapness in Ireland.

Having vindicated, we hope, sufficiently, the Resolutions of the Irish Parliament, we shall now take notice of an *objection* made by some of its members to the 10th Article, charged with granting a *tribute* annually payable

payable to Britain, as if a small contribution to the support of a Maritime Force, necessary to the common protection of both countries, deserved a degrading appellation; more especially as the application of that supply to any specifick naval service, is to be solely directed by the Irish Parliament, although it is to arise out of an hereditary revenue, settled more than a century past by an Irish Parliament upon the King of England and Ireland.

The eventual supply, for such it only is, now to be granted, will depend for its existence and quantity upon an increase of Irish trade, necessarily requiring a larger establishment of force and expence. If there be no increase, there will be no supply, and if there be an increase the supply will rise only in proportion to it.

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When assistance has been purchased by Great Britain, as it has been almost in every war, from allies unconnected with her by any common interest, and without any of the qualifying circumstances, which attend what those, whom we have alluded to, call a tribute, however those subsidised powers may have been blamed for submitting to such terms, Great Britain has been often served but never dishonoured by becoming thus tributary to many a petty Prince. Yet in this sense only would Ireland be tributary to Great Britain, for her assistance by paying an annual sum, more properly termed a subsidy, than a tribute.

Should the adjustment now proposed by the Parliament of Ireland be rejected here, God grant that without any degree of pre-science exceeding what is derived from experience and a slight knowledge of History, we shall not be better warranted than the

North

abovementioned North British Member was in his prediction, when we foretell that the King of Great Britain and Ireland, while he retains both characters, giving his assent to the bills of each Parliament, will not be able to exercise that function of Royal legislative power consistently with the duty of a common Father to all his subjects.

We shall therefore conclude by hoping that whatever opposition may be consistently given by those who either voted against the two bills mentioned in the foregoing abstract, or did not vote at all, none who joined in their support upon the principle that Great Britain and Ireland should retain all their respective natural or acquired advantages, but subject to the same duties upon importation and upon exportation to Foreign Markets, will oppose a further enlargement of the trade of Ireland grounded upon

upon the same principles, certain as it is that the acquired advantages of Great Britain incomparably exceed the superiority of those natural to Ireland. Nay we are far from conceding any superiority to Ireland in the sum total of gifts gratuitously bestowed by Providence without Labour and Industry.

*Resolutions*

*Resolutions of the House of Commons of Ireland.*

*Resolved I.* That it is the opinion of this committee, that it is highly important to the interest of the British Empire, that the trade between Great Britain and Ireland be extended as much as possible, and for that purpose, that the intercourse and commerce be finally settled and regulated on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both countries.

*Resolved II.* That towards carrying into full effect so desirable a settlement, it is fit and proper that all articles, not the growth of Great Britain and Ireland, should be imported into each Kingdom from the other, under the same regulations, and at the same duties, if subject to duties, to which they are liable when imported directly from the place of their growth, product, or manufacture; and that all duties originally paid on importation, to either country respectively, shall be drawn back on exportation to the other.

*Resolved III.* That for the same purpose, that it is proper that no prohibition should exist in either country against the importation, use, or sale of any article, the growth, product, or manufacture of the other; and that the duty on the importation of every such article, if subject to duty in either country, should be precisely the same in one country as in the other, except where an addition may be necessary in either country, in consequence of an internal duty on any such article of its own consumption.

*Resolved IV.* That in all cases where the duties on articles of the growth, product, or manufacture of either country are different

ent on the importation into the other, it would be expedient that they should be reduced in the Kingdom where they are the highest, to the amount payable in the other, and that all such articles should be exportable from the Kingdom into which they shall be imported, as free from duty as the similar commodities or home manufactures of the same Kingdom.

*Resolved V.* That for the same purpose, it is also proper that in all cases where either Kingdom shall charge articles of its own consumption with an internal duty on the manufacture, or a duty on the material, the same manufacture, when imported from the other, may be charged with a further duty on importation, to the same amount as the internal duty on the manufacture, or to an amount adequate to countervail the duty on the material, and shall be entitled to such drawbacks or bounties on exportation, as may leave the same subject to no heavier burthen than the home-made manufacture; such further duty to continue so long only as the internal consumption shall be charged with the duty or duties; to balance which it shall be imposed, or until the manufacture coming from the other Kingdom shall be subjected there to an equal burthen, not drawn back or compensated on exportation.

*Resolved VI.* That in order to give permanency to the settlements now intended to be established, it is necessary that no prohibition, or new or additional duties, should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom, on the importation of any article, of the growth, product, or manufacture of the other, except such

such additional duties, as may be requisite to balance duties on internal consumption, pursuant to the foregoing resolution.

*Resolved VII.* That for the same purpose, it is necessary further, that no prohibitions, or new additional duties, should be hereafter imposed on either kingdom, on the exportation of any article of native growth, product, or manufacture, from thence to the other, except such as either kingdom may deem expedient from time to time, upon corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuit; and also, except where there now exists any prohibition, which is not reciprocal, or any duty, which is not equal, in both kingdoms; in every which case the prohibition may be made reciprocal, or the duties raised so as to make them equal.

*Resolved VIII.* That for the same purpose, it is necessary that no bounties whatsoever should be paid, or payable in either kingdom, on the exportation of any article to the other, except such as relate to corn, meal, malt flour, and biscuits, and such as are in the nature of drawbacks or compensations for duties paid; and that no bounties should be granted in this kingdom, on the exportation of any article imported from the British Plantations, or any manufacture made of such article, unless in cases where a similar bounty is payable in Britain on exportation from thence or where such bounty is merely in the nature of a drawback, or compensation of or for duties paid over and above any duties paid thereon in Britain.

*Resolved IX.* That it is expedient for the general benefit of the British Empire, that the importation of articles from foreign

States

States should be regulated from time to time, in each kingdom, on such terms as may afford an effectual preference to the importation of similar articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of the other.

*Resolved X.* That for the better protection of trade, whatever sum the gross hereditary revenue of this kingdom (after deducting all drawbacks, repayments, or bounties granted in the nature of drawbacks) shall produce annually, over and above the sum of £. should be appropriated towards the support of the *Naval Force* of the Empire, in *such manner as the Parliament of this Kingdom shall direct.*

F I N I S.

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